

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5, 8, 11-56, 58-65, and 67-76 are presently active in this case, Claims 1-2, 5, 11, 14, 18, 33, 41-46, 54-56, 58, 67-68, and 74 amended, and Claims 6-7, 9-10, 57, 66, and 77-86 canceled by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 1-4, 6-10, 12-56, 58-61, 63-65, 69-73, 75-83 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,983,828 to Savas, and Claims, 5, 11, 62, 66-68 and 74 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants first wish to thank Examiner Deo for the indication of allowable subject matter. As noted below, several of the allowable claims have been placed in independent form to be in condition for allowance. Other independent claims have been amended to include what is believed to be the allowable subject matter of the claims indicated as allowable.

Applicants also wish to thank Examiner Deo for the April 18, 2005 personal interview at which time the outstanding issues in this case were discussed. During the interview, Applicants presented amendments and arguments substantially as indicated in this response. While no formal agreement was reached, the Examiner indicated that the claims and arguments presented herein appear to overcome the rejection based on Savas, but further consideration would be needed.

Regarding the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Applicants have amended Claim 18 to provide proper antecedent basis, and have canceled Claim 83.

Applicants request clarification of the rejection of Claim 29 as this claim does not include the term “the exposed surfaces,” as indicated in Item 4 of the Office Action.

With respect to the objection to the Information Disclosure Statement, submitted herewith are copies of the foreign language document submitted in previous IDSs. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner consider these references and list them on a PTO Form 892 to indicate consideration of such references.

Turning now to the merits, in order to expedite issuance of a patent in this case, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 33, 41, 56 and 58 to clarify the patentable features of the present invention over the cited references. Specifically, Applicants’ Claim 1, as amended recites a method for reducing charging damage to a substrate in a plasma processing system. The method includes coupling a first power to the plasma processing system to perform a first process on the substrate using a first plasma. After the first process, a second power is coupled to the plasma processing system, the second power being lower than the first power and being selected to reduce the accumulation of negative charge on at least one surface of the plasma processing system arising from applying the first power. After coupling the second power, a third power lower than the second power is coupled to the plasma processing system in order to perform a second process on the substrate.

Thus, as discussed in the April 18th interview, Applicants’ Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the first power is associated with the first process, the second power is lower than the first power and associated with reducing a negative charge, and the third power is lower than the second power and associated with the second process. As discussed in the April 18th interview, these amendments are believed to provide the allowable subject matter of the objected to claims of the outstanding Official Action. Further, independent Claims 33, 56, and 58 have been similarly amended to include the three separate processing powers associated with respective processes, and reduced charge steps.

In contrast, the cited reference to Savas discloses an apparatus for improving an etch process. As discussed in the April 18th interview, improvements to the etched process are provided by pulsing power during the etch process as shown in Figs. 3, 4, and 6 of Savas. However, Savas does not disclose the separate process powers associated with different steps within the process chamber as recited in independent Claims 1, 33, 56, and 58. Therefore, these independent claims patentably define over the cited references.

Claims 5 and 74, which were indicated as allowable, have now been amended to be in independent form including the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore, these claims also patentably define over the cited references.

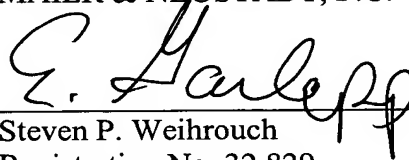
Finally, independent Claim 41 has been amended to recite extinguishing a first plasma and after extinguishing the plasma, processing the substrate by coupling intermediate power, which was previously included in allowable Claim 5. Therefore, Applicants believe that Thus, as discussed in the April 18th interview, Claim 41, as amended, patentably defines over the cited references for similar reasons to that of allowable Claim 5.

For the reasons stated above, Applicants' independent Claims 1, 5, 33, 41, 56, 58 and 74 patentably define over the cited references. Further, as the remaining claims in this case depend from one of the independent claims distinguished above, these remaining dependent claims also patentably define over the cited references.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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